

*Enter Lady Bracknell. The couples separate in alarm.*

*[Exit Merriman.]*

*Lady Bracknell.* Gwendolen! What does this mean?

*Gwendolen.* Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

*Lady Bracknell.* Come here. Sit down. Sit down immediately.

Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. *[Turns to Jack.]*

sir, of my daughter's sudden flight by her trusty maid, whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin,, I followed her at once by a luggage train. Her unhappy father is,

am glad to say, under the impression that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a permanent income on

Thought. I do not propose to undeceive him. Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. I would consider it wrong. But of course, you will clearly understand that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. On this point,

as indeed on all points, I am firm.

*Jack.* I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen, Lady Bracknell!

*Lady Bracknell.* You are nothing of the kind, sir. And now

as regards Algernon! . . . Algernon!

*Algernon.* Yes, Aunt Augusta?

*Lady Bracknell.* May I ask if it is in this house that your invalid friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

*Algernon. [Stammering.]* Oh! No! Bunbury doesn't live here.

Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead.

*Lady Bracknell.* Dead! When did Mr. Bunbury die?

*Algernon.* [Airily..] Oh! I killed Bunbury this afternoon.

mean poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

*Lady Bracknell.* What did he die of?

*Algernon.* Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded.

*Lady Bracknell.* Exploded! Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? I was not aware that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is well punished for his morbidity.

*Algernon.* My dear Aunt Augusta, I mean he was found out!

The doctors found out that Bunbury could not live, that is what I mean—so Bunbury died.